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Economic and Social Council

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Commission on the Status of Women
Fifty-fifth session
22 February-4 March 2011
Agenda item 3 (c)
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": gender mainstreaming, situations and programmatic matters

Benin,* Israel and Namibia**

Women, the girl child and HIV and AIDS

The Commission on the Status of Women,

Reaffirming the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,[1] the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly,[2] the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development,[3] the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS[4] and the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS,[5] the HIV and AIDS-related goals contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration[6] and the Millennium Development Goals, in particular the resolve of Member States to have halted, by 2015, and begun to reverse, the spread of HIV, as well as the commitments on HIV and AIDS made at the 2005 World Summit and the High-level Plenary Meeting of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals,[7]

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* In accordance with rule 69 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council.

** On behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Southern African Development Community.

[1] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

[2] General Assembly resolution S-23/2, annex, and resolution S-23/3, annex.

[3] *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

[4] General Assembly resolution S-26/2, annex.

[5] General Assembly resolution 60/262, annex.

[6] See General Assembly resolution 55/2.

[7] See General Assembly resolution 65/1.

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Welcoming the in-depth study of the Secretary-General on all forms of violence against women,[8] taking note of the recommendations contained therein, and welcoming also the initiative taken by the Secretary-General in 2008 to launch the multi-year campaign "UNiTE to End Violence Against Women",

Taking note of the outcome of the 2008 high-level meeting on HIV/AIDS,

Recalling all previous resolutions on this subject,

Reaffirming that prevention, treatment, care and support for people living with and affected by HIV and AIDS are mutually reinforcing elements of an effective response that must be integrated into a comprehensive approach to combat the epidemic, and recognizing the need to ensure the respect, protection and fulfilment of human rights in the context of HIV and AIDS,

Recognizing that populations destabilized by armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters, including refugees, internally displaced persons and, in particular, women and children, are increasingly vulnerable to HIV infection,

Deeply concerned by the increased vulnerability to HIV infection faced by women and girls living with disabilities resulting from, inter alia, legal and economic inequalities, sexual and gender-based violence, discrimination and violations of their rights,

Deeply concerned also that the global HIV and AIDS pandemic disproportionately affects women and girls and that the majority of new HIV infections occur among young people,

Concerned that the vulnerability of women and girls to HIV is increased by their unequal legal, economic and social status, including poverty as well as other cultural and physiological factors, violence against women and girls and adolescents, early marriage, child and forced marriage, premature and early sexual relations, commercial sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation,

Concerned also that HIV infection rates are at least twice as high among young people, especially young and married women, who do not finish primary school as among those who do,

Concerned further that women and girls are more vulnerable to HIV and have different and unequal access to the use of health resources for the prevention of HIV infection and treatment of and care and support for people living with HIV and affected by AIDS,

Stressing that the HIV and AIDS pandemic, with its devastating scale and impact on women and girls, requires urgent action across all internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, in all fields and at all levels,

Stressing also that gender equality and the political, social and economic empowerment of women and girls are fundamental elements in the reduction of their vulnerability to HIV and are essential to reversing the pandemic,

Expressing its concern that the HIV and AIDS pandemic reinforces gender inequalities, that women and girls are disproportionately affected by the pandemic,

[8] A/61/122 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1.

that they are more easily infected, especially at an earlier age than men and boys, that they bear the disproportionate burden of caring for and supporting people living with and affected by HIV and AIDS and that they become more vulnerable to poverty as a result of the pandemic,

1. *Reaffirms* the need for Governments, supported by the relevant actors, including civil society and the private sector, to intensify national efforts and international cooperation in the implementation of the commitments contained in the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS,[4] the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS,[5] the Beijing Platform for Action[1] and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development;[3]

2. *Also reaffirms* the commitment to achieve universal access to comprehensive HIV prevention programmes, treatment, care and support, and the resolve to have halted, by 2015, and begun to reverse, the spread of HIV, and stresses the urgency of significantly scaling up efforts towards meeting these goals, and in this regard looks forward to the convening of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly in June 2011, which is to undertake a comprehensive review of the progress made in addressing the HIV and AIDS pandemic, and the remaining gaps and challenges, and to chart the way forward so as to guide and monitor the HIV and AIDS response beyond 2010;

3. *Further reaffirms* the commitment to achieve universal access to reproductive health by 2015, as set out in the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and in Millennium Development Goal 5, which encompasses integrating this goal into strategies to attain internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration[6] aimed at reducing maternal mortality, improving maternal health, reducing child mortality, promoting gender equality, combating HIV and AIDS and eradicating poverty;

4. *Stresses* the need to significantly increase and coordinate political and financial commitment to address gender equality and equity in national HIV and AIDS responses, and urges Governments to effectively reflect in their national policies, strategies and budgets the gender dimension of the pandemic, in line with the time-bound goals of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, and the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS, as well as the goals of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development;

5. *Urges* Governments to take all necessary measures to create an enabling environment for the empowerment of women and girls, to strengthen their economic independence and their right to property and inheritance, and to protect and promote their full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms in order to enable them to protect themselves from HIV infection and to mitigate the impact of the pandemic;

6. *Urges* Governments and other relevant stakeholders to address the challenges faced by older women in accessing HIV prevention, treatment, care and support, as well as in caring for people living with or affected by HIV and AIDS, including orphaned children in vulnerable situations;

7. *Also urges* Governments and other relevant stakeholders to address the increased vulnerability to HIV faced by women and girls living with disabilities,

ensuring their equal access to prevention, treatment, care and support, as an integral part of their HIV and AIDS response;

8. *Emphasizes* the need to strengthen policy and programme linkages and coordination between HIV and AIDS and sexual and reproductive health, and their inclusion in national development plans, including poverty reduction strategies and sector-wide approaches, where they exist, as a necessary strategy for fighting the HIV and AIDS pandemic and mitigating its impact on the population, which could result in more relevant and cost-effective interventions with greater impact;

9. *Urges* Governments to strengthen initiatives that would increase the capacities of women and adolescent girls to protect themselves from HIV infection, principally through the provision of health care and health services, including for sexual and reproductive health, in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, and that integrate HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support and include voluntary counselling and testing, including through prevention education that promotes gender equality within a culturally and gender-sensitive framework;

10. *Urges* Governments and other relevant stakeholders to address the situation faced by girls caring for people living with or affected by HIV and AIDS, who are often forced to drop out of school;

11. *Urges* Governments, in the context of HIV and other sexually transmitted infection prevention programmes, to ensure accessible and affordable procurement of safe and effective prevention commodities, in particular male and female condoms, to ensure that their supply is adequate and secure, and to promote their ongoing research, including that for safe and effective microbicides;

12. *Reminds* Member States to consider that flexibilities in trade-related intellectual property rights can be used by Member States, when necessary, to protect public health and address public-health crises;

13. *Urges* Governments to strengthen and implement legal, policy, administrative and other measures for the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls, including harmful traditional and customary practices, female genital mutilation, domestic violence, abuse, early marriage, child and forced marriage, rape, including marital rape, and other forms of sexual violence and coerced sexual activity, battering and trafficking in women and girls, and to ensure that violence against women is addressed as an integral part of the national HIV and AIDS response;

14. *Also urges* Governments, where they have not yet done so, to institute and ensure the enforcement of laws to protect women and girls from early marriage, child and forced marriage and marital rape;

15. *Further urges* Governments to prioritize and expand access to treatment for all people in all settings, in a progressive and sustainable manner, including the prevention and treatment of opportunistic infections and other HIV-related diseases and the effective use of and adherence to antiretroviral medication, including through access to clinical and laboratory testing and post-exposure prophylaxis, with the full protection of their human rights, including their reproductive rights and sexual health, in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International

Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action[1] and other relevant international human rights instruments;

16. *Urges* Governments to promote access to affordable, high-quality, safe and effective drugs, and HIV and maternal health-related pharmaceutical products for women and girls, and to collect data on treatment disaggregated by age, sex, marital status and continuity of care;

17. *Requests* Governments to promote and provide equal and equitable access for all persons, throughout their life cycle, to social services related to health care, including education, clean water and safe sanitation, nutrition, food security and health, education programmes and social protection schemes, especially for women and girls living with or affected by HIV and AIDS, including prevention and treatment for opportunistic infections and other HIV-related diseases;

18. *Calls upon* Governments to intensify efforts to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and girls in relation to HIV and AIDS, including through challenging gender stereotypes, stigmatization, discriminatory attitudes and gender inequalities, and to encourage the active involvement of men and boys in this regard;

19. *Stresses* that women and girls should be empowered to protect themselves against violence and that, in this regard, women have the right to exercise control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality, including their sexual and reproductive health, free of coercion, discrimination and violence;

20. *Calls upon* all Governments and the international donor community to integrate a gender perspective in all matters of international assistance and cooperation and to take measures to ensure that resources commensurate with the impact of HIV and AIDS on women and girls are made available, in particular in funding provided to national HIV and AIDS programmes designed to promote and protect the human rights of women and girls in the context of the epidemic, to promote economic opportunities for women, including to diminish their financial vulnerability and their risk of exposure to HIV, and to achieve the gender-related goals set out, inter alia, in the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS;

21. *Calls upon* Governments to integrate HIV prevention, voluntary counselling and voluntary testing of HIV into other health services, including sexual and reproductive health, family planning, maternity and tuberculosis services, as well as the provision of services for the prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted infections in the mother-to-child transmission services for pregnant women living with HIV;

22. *Encourages* the continued collaboration among the Secretariat and co-sponsors of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and other international organizations with a view to their continuing to scale up efforts to reduce the transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, in particular in the context of emergency situations and as part of humanitarian efforts, and their actively seeking the achievement of results for women and girls, and also encourages the integration of the mainstreaming of a gender perspective throughout their work;

23. *Welcomes* the decision of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria to scale up a gender-sensitive response to HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria in order to address the vulnerabilities of women and girls to HIV infection;

24. *Requests* the Secretariat and co-sponsors of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and other United Nations organizations responding to the HIV and AIDS pandemic, as well as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, to mainstream a gender and human rights perspective throughout their HIV- and AIDS-related operations, including policy, planning, monitoring and evaluation, and to ensure that programmes and policies are developed and adequately resourced to address the specific needs of women and girls;

25. *Calls upon* Member States to accelerate action on women, girls, gender equality and HIV, in partnership with all relevant stakeholders, including civil society organizations, in accordance with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development;

26. *Recommends* the development and use of gender analysis, the harmonization of data, and the development and refinement of indicators as part of the process to update the core indicators on HIV and AIDS for the reporting system for the special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS, to help measure women's and girls' inequalities in the context of HIV;

27. *Encourages* the United Nations to continue to support national monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in the context of the "three ones" principles, to enable the production and dissemination of comprehensive and timely information on the gender dimension of the pandemic, including through the collection of data disaggregated by sex, age and marital status, and to raise awareness about the need to address the critical intersection between gender inequality and HIV and AIDS;

28. *Encourages* Member States to work in partnership with the Global Coalition on Women and AIDS, convened by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and its partners, so as to mobilize and support a wide range of national actors, including women's groups and networks of women living with HIV, in order to ensure that national HIV and AIDS programmes are better able to respond to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of women, girls and adolescents;

29. *Welcomes* the call by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS to eliminate mother-to-child transmission of HIV by 2015, and urges Governments to rapidly scale up access to prevention and treatment programmes designed to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV and to encourage men to participate with women in programmes designed to prevent mother-to-child transmission, to encourage women and girls to participate in those programmes and to provide sustained treatment and care for the mother after pregnancy, including care and support for the family;

30. *Encourages* the design and implementation of programmes, including awareness-raising programmes, to encourage and enable men, including young men, to adopt safe, non-coercive and responsible sexual and reproductive behaviour and to use effective methods to prevent the transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections;

31. *Stresses* the importance of ensuring that young men and women have access to information and education, including peer education and youth-specific HIV education, sex education and services necessary for behavioural change, so as to enable them to develop the life skills required to reduce their vulnerability to HIV infection and reproductive ill health, in full partnership with young persons, parents, families, educators and health-care providers;

32. *Calls for* enhanced efforts by all relevant actors to include a gender perspective in the development of HIV and AIDS programmes and policies and in the training of personnel involved in implementing such programmes, including by focusing on the role of men and boys in addressing HIV and AIDS;

33. *Encourages* Governments and all other relevant actors to promote funding, both domestically and externally, and to support and expedite action-oriented research leading to affordable, safe and effective methods controlled by women to prevent HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, including use of microbicides and vaccines, and research on strategies that empower women to protect themselves from sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, and methods of care, support and treatment for women of various ages, and to promote their involvement in all aspects of such research;

34. *Encourages* Governments to increase the provision of resources and facilities to women who find themselves having to provide care and/or economic support for those infected with HIV or affected by the pendemic and to address the challenges faced by the survivors and caregivers, in particular children and older persons, as well as to ensure the balanced sharing of the provision of care by both men and women;

35. *Emphasizes* the negative impact of HIV-related stigma, especially for women and girls, in seeking and accessing HIV and AIDS programmes, and urges Governments to develop and implement policies and programmes designed to eliminate HIV-related stigma and discrimination, so as to ensure that the dignity, rights and privacy of people living with HIV and affected by AIDS, in particular women and girls, especially in the context of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, are protected;

36. *Urges* Governments to continue to promote the participation and the significant contribution of people living with HIV, young people and civil society actors, in particular women's organizations, in addressing the problem of HIV and AIDS in all its aspects, including promoting a gender perspective, and to promote their full involvement and participation in the design, planning, implementation and evaluation of HIV and AIDS programmes, as well as in creating an enabling environment for combating stigmatization;

37. *Urges* Governments, the donor community and relevant entities of the United Nations system to prioritize programmes addressing the specific needs of women and girls in HIV response, to ensure resources to support the development of capacities of women's organizations for HIV and AIDS programme development and implementation, and to streamline funding procedures and requirements that will facilitate resource flows to community-level services;

38. *Also urges* Governments, the donor community and relevant entities of the United Nations system to ensure that gender-equality implications are a key component of research, implementation and evaluation of new prevention methods

and that such new prevention methods are part of a comprehensive approach to HIV prevention that protects and supports the rights of women and girls;

39. *Welcomes* the financial contributions made to date to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and urges further contributions to sustain the Fund, and calls upon all countries to encourage the private sector to contribute to the Fund;

40. *Stresses* the importance of building up national competence and capacity to provide an assessment of the drivers and impact of the epidemic, which should be used in planning for comprehensive HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support and for mitigating the impact of HIV and AIDS;

41. *Urges* the international community to complement and supplement, through increased international development assistance, efforts of the developing countries that commit increased national funds to fighting the HIV and AIDS pandemic, and especially to address the needs of women and girls around the world, in particular in those countries most affected by the HIV and AIDS pandemic, particularly in Africa, especially sub-Saharan Africa, and in the Caribbean;

42. *Recommends* that, in the process of the 2011 comprehensive review of HIV/AIDS, gender-equality perspectives should be included throughout the deliberations and that attention should be paid to the situation of women and girls living with and affected by HIV and AIDS;

43. *Invites* the Secretary-General to take into account, when preparing the report requested by the General Assembly in paragraph 18 of its resolution 65/180 of 20 December 2010, the disproportionate impact of HIV and AIDS on women and girls and the gender dimensions of the epidemic;

44. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a report to the Commission on the Status of Women at its fifty-sixth session on the implementation of the present resolution, with an emphasis on accelerated actions taken in regard to women, the girl child and HIV and AIDS, in accordance with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, using information provided by Member States, the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations, with a view to assessing the impact of the present resolution on the well-being of women and the girl child.

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Commission on the Status of Women
Fifty-fifth session
12 March 2010 and 22 February-4 March 2011

Draft report

Rapporteur: Leysa Sow (Senegal)

Organization of the session

A. Opening and duration of the session

1. The Commission on the Status of Women held its fifty-fifth session at United Nations Headquarters on 12 March 2010 and from 22 February-4 March 2011. The Commission held _____ meetings (1st to __).

2. The session was opened by the Chair of the Commission, Garen Nazarian (Armenia), who also made a statement.

3. At the 2nd meeting, on 22 February 2011, statements were made by the Deputy Secretary-General, the President of the Economic and Social Council, and the Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women).

4. At the same meeting, a statement was made by the Chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

5. Also at the same meeting, the distinguished guest speaker, Mrs. Emine Erdogan (Turkey) addressed the Commission.

6. At the 9th meeting, on 1 March, the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its causes and consequences, made a statement.

B. Attendance

7. The session was attended by representatives of __ States members of the Commission. Observers for other States Members of the United Nations and for non-member States, representatives of organizations of the United Nations system and observers for intergovernmental, non-governmental and other organizations also attended.

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C. Officers of the Commission

8. In accordance with paragraph 2 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1987/21, the officers are elected to the Bureau of the Commission for a term of office of two years. The following officers were elected to serve on the Bureau of the fifty-fourth and fifty-fifth sessions:

Chair:
Garen Nazarian (Armenia)

Vice-Chair:
Takashi Ashiki (Japan)
Julio Peralta (Paraguay)
Leysa Sow (Senegal)
Roberto Storaci (Italy)

Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur:
Leysa Sow (Senegal)

9. At the 1st meeting of the 55th session, on 12 March 2010, the Commission elected Filippo Cinti (Italy) and Maria Luz Melon (Argentina) to replace Roberto Storaci (Italy) and Julio Peralta (Paraguay), who had resigned as Vice-Chairs.

10. At the 2nd meeting, on 22 February, the Commission elected Tetsuya Kimura (Japan) to replace Takashi Ashiki (Japan), who had resigned as Vice-Chair.

D. Agenda and organization of work

11. At its 2nd meeting, on 22 February, the Commission adopted its agenda and approved its organization of work as contained in document E/CN.6/2011/1. The agenda read as follows:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century":
   (a) Implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives:
      (i) Priority theme: access and participation of women and girls in education, training, science and technology, including for the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work;
      (ii) Review theme: the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child;
   (b) Emerging issues, trends and new approaches to issues affecting the situation of women or equality between women and men;
   (c) Gender mainstreaming, situations and programmatic matters.
4. Communications concerning the status of women.

5. Follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolutions and decisions.

6. Provisional agenda for the fifty-sixth session of the Commission.

7. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its fifty-fifth session.

12. Also at the same meeting, the Commission approved its organization of work, as contained in document E/CN.6/2011/1/Add.1.

E. Appointment of the members of a working group on communications on the status of women

13. Pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1983/27, the Commission established a working group to consider communications concerning the status of women. In accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 2009/16, the following five members, nominated by their regional groups, were appointed to the working group of the fifty-fourth and fifty-fifth sessions:

Ms. Cho Hyung-hwa (Republic of Korea)
Mr. Nicolas Burniat (Belgium)
Ms. Kadra Ahmed Hassan (Djibouti)
Mr. Julio Peralta (Paraguay)
Ms. Irina Velichko (Belarus)

14. At its 2nd meeting, the Commission confirmed the appointment of Efraim Gomez (Sweden) to replace Nicolas Burniat (Belgium), who had resigned as member of the Working Group.

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Commission on the Status of Women
Fifty-fifth session
22 February-4 March 2011
Agenda item 6
Provisional agenda for the fifty-sixth session of the Commission

Provisional agenda and documentation for the fifty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.

Documentation

Annotated provisional agenda and proposed organization of work of the Commission on the Status of Women

3. Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century":

(a) Implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern, and further actions and initiatives;

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on the empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges

Report of the Executive Director of UN-Women

Note by the Secretariat containing a discussion guide for the High-level round table of the Commission

(b) Emerging issues, trends and new approaches to issues affecting the situation of women or equality between women and men;

(c) Gender mainstreaming, situations and programmatic matters.

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Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on progress in mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development, implementation and evaluation of national policies and programmes, with a particular focus on the priority theme

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation of, and assistance to, Palestinian women

Report of the Secretary-General on the release of women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflicts

Report of the Secretary-General on the economic empowerment of women

Report of the Secretary-General on eliminating maternal mortality and morbidity through the empowerment of women

Report of the Secretary-General on women, the girl child and HIV and AIDS

Report of the Secretary-General on ending female genital mutilation

Report of the Secretary-General on the joint workplan of UN-Women and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Report of UN-Women on the activities of the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women

Note by the Secretariat transmitting the outcome of the forty-ninth, fiftieth and fifty-first sessions of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

4. **Communications concerning the status of women.**

Documentation

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the list of confidential communications concerning the status of women

5. **Follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolutions and decisions.**

Documentation

Letter from the President of the Economic and Social Council to the Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women

Note by the Secretariat as input to the high-level segment of the substantive session of 2012 of the Economic and Social Council

6. **Provisional agenda for the fifty-seventh session of the Commission.**

7. **Adoption of the report of the Commission on its fifty-sixth session.**

United Nations E/CN.6/2011/L.6

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Commission on the Status of Women
Fifty-fifth session
22 February-4 March 2011
Agenda item 3
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Draft agreed conclusions submitted by the Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women on the basis of informal consultations

Access and participation of women and girls in education, training and science and technology, including for the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work

1. The Commission on the Status of Women reaffirms the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly and the declarations adopted by the Commission on the occasion of the tenth and fifteenth anniversaries of the Fourth World Conference on Women.

2. The Commission reiterates that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocols thereto, as well as other conventions and treaties, such as the relevant conventions of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the International Labour Organization, provide a legal framework and a comprehensive set of measures for the promotion of gender equality in education and employment.

3. The Commission recalls the United Nations Millennium Declaration and General Assembly resolution 65/1 of 22 September 2010, and recognizes the interdependence of all the Millennium Development Goals. The Commission also recalls the ministerial declaration of the 2010 high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council on implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and empowerment of women. It takes note of the Budapest Science Agenda-Framework for Action, adopted at the World

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Conference on Science in 1999, and of the Dakar Framework for Action: Education for All, adopted at the World Education Forum in 2000.

4. The Commission welcomes the establishment of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and its operationalization, which will strengthen the ability of the United Nations to support the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women, and welcomes the appointment of Michelle Bachelet as the first Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN-Women.

5. The Commission acknowledges the important role of national machineries for the advancement of women, which should be placed at the highest possible level of government, the relevant contribution of national human rights institutions where they exist, and the important role of civil society, especially women's organizations, in advancing the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and in promoting the full and equal access and participation of women and girls in education, training and science and technology.

6. The Commission stresses that education is a human right, and that equal access to education, training and science and technology empowers women and girls in the context of global economic and technological changes and promotes development, all human rights, human rights education and learning at all levels, as well as gender equality, the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls and the eradication of poverty.

7. The Commission reaffirms that the best interest of the child shall be the guiding principle of those responsible for his or her education and guidance in the exercise by the child of his or her rights and that responsibility lies in the first place with his or her parents or legal guardians.

8. The Commission welcomes the progress made in increasing women's and girls' access to and participation in education and training, including science and technology education. The Commission recognizes the potential of education and training and science and technology, to contribute to the economic empowerment of women, which also leads to accelerating progress towards achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, by 2015.

9. The Commission notes that quality education and full and equal access and participation in science and technology for women of all ages are imperative for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women, and an economic necessity, and that they provide women with the knowledge, capacity, aptitudes, skills, ethical values and understanding necessary for lifelong learning, employment, better physical and mental health, including the prevention and control of maternal mortality, HIV and AIDS and other communicable and non-communicable diseases, as well as for full participation in social, economic and political development.

10. The Commission welcomes the important contribution that women make to all fields of education, training, science and technology, and recognizes their work in the full spectrum of professions in science and technology. The Commission also acknowledges that women and men should continue to contribute to the promotion of the ethical dimensions of scientific and technological progress.

11. The Commission recognizes that research and development in science and technology, and its dissemination, have insufficiently responded to women's needs. The Commission stresses the need for increased cooperation among countries, including through international cooperation and transfer of technologies on mutually agreed terms, especially to developing countries, in order to enhance equal access of women to science and technology and their participation in science and technology education.

12. The Commission expresses continued concern at the negative impact of the global crises, such as the financial and economic crisis, the food crisis and continuing food insecurity, and the energy crisis, as well as the challenges posed by poverty, natural disasters and climate change, on the empowerment of women and girls, including their access and participation in education, training, science and technology.

13. The Commission expresses concern at the serious and persistent obstacles that still hinder the advancement of women and further affect their participation in decision-making, including the persistent feminization of poverty, the lack of equal access to health, education, training and employment, as well as armed conflict, lack of security and natural disasters.

14. The Commission acknowledges that men and women continue to face gender stereotypes, as well as challenges and obstacles to changing discriminatory attitudes, and stresses that challenges and obstacles remain in the implementation of international standards and norms to address the inequality between men and women.

15. The Commission expresses deep concern about all legal, economic, social and cultural barriers that prevent women and girls from having equal access to education and training, and recognizes that some women and girls face multiple discrimination and disadvantages that prevent their participation in education, training and employment.

16. The Commission recognizes that the upbringing of children requires the shared responsibility of parents, women and men and society as a whole, and that maternity, motherhood, parenting and the role of women in procreation must not be a basis for discrimination nor restrict the full participation of women in society.

17. The Commission expresses deep concern that discrimination and violence against women and girls, including sexual harassment and bullying, continue to occur in all parts of the world, including in education and in the workplace. The Commission notes that those are obstacles to the achievement of women's and girls' equal access to and participation in education, including in science and technology education, and training, as well as impediments to the development of their full potential as equal partners with men in other aspects of life, including full employment and decent work.

18. The Commission also expresses concern that inadequate educational opportunities and low quality education reduce the benefits of education and training for women and girls, men and boys, and that women's educational gains are yet to translate into equal access to full employment and decent work, with consequent long-term adverse effects on the development of any society. It remains deeply concerned by the persistence of high female illiteracy rates and gender stereotyped roles of women and men, which inhibit women's equal participation in

employment, leading to occupational segregation, including the widespread underrepresentation of women and girls in many fields of science and technology, which represents a loss of talent and perspectives, hinders economic development and women's economic empowerment and can contribute to the gender pay gap.

19. The Commission expresses concern about high drop-out rates from school of female students in many parts of the world, especially at the secondary level, and including at the tertiary level, owing to multiple discrimination and factors that impede girls' participation in education.

20. The Commission expresses concern that the unequal sharing of responsibilities of daily life, including caregiving between women and men, girls and boys, has a disproportionate impact on women's and girls' access to education, training and science and technology, and on their economic empowerment and long-term economic security.

21. The Commission underlines that addressing the barriers to equal access of women and girls to education, training and science and technology requires a systematic, comprehensive, integrated, sustainable, multidisciplinary and multisectoral approach, including policy, legislative and programmatic interventions and, as appropriate, gender-responsive budgeting, at all levels.

22. The Commission urges Governments, at all levels, including local authorities and national machineries for the advancement of women, and/or, as appropriate, the relevant entities of the United Nations system and international and regional organizations, within their respective mandates and bearing in mind national priorities, and invites national human rights institutions where they exist, and civil society, including non-governmental organizations, academia, educational, scientific research and funding institutions, the private sector, employer organizations, trade unions, professional associations, the media and other relevant actors, to take the following actions, as appropriate:

Strengthening national legislation, policies and programmes

(a) Mainstream a gender perspective in legislation, policies and programmes within all governmental sectors, including education, training, science and technology, academia, research institutions and research funding agencies, in order to address unequal access and participation of women and girls in education, training and science and technology, including for the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work;

(b) Strengthen capacities to ensure that science education policies and curricula are relevant to the needs of women and girls so that developments in science and technology can directly benefit them;

(c) Improve and systematize the collection, analysis and dissemination of sex-, age- and disability-disaggregated data; enhance capacity development in this regard; and develop relevant gender-sensitive indicators to support legislative development and policymaking on education, training and science and technology;

(d) Encourage the provision of institutional and financial support for academic studies that can produce gender-specific knowledge and feed into all policies and programmes on education, training and research and support research, including longitudinal policy research, to identify specific gaps in education and

career pathways, so as to promote the retention of women and girls in different fields of science and technology and in other relevant disciplines;

(e) Strengthen the monitoring and evaluation and, where appropriate, the review of existing policies and programmes to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women in education, training, science and technology, and access to full employment and decent work, in order to assess their effectiveness and impact, ensure a gender perspective in all policies and programmes and strengthen accountability;

(f) Encourage and, as appropriate, increase public and private investment in education and training to expand women's and girls' access to quality education and training throughout their life cycle, including, inter alia, through the provision of scholarships for study in science and technology in secondary and tertiary institutions, and to ensure that research and development in the field of science and technology directly benefits women and girls;

(g) Incorporate systematically a gender perspective into budgetary policies at all levels to ensure that public resources in education, training, science, technology and research equally benefit women and men, girls and boys, and contribute to the empowerment of women and girls in particular;

(h) Urge developed countries that have not yet done so, in accordance with their commitments, to make concrete efforts towards meeting the target of 0.7 per cent of their gross national product for official development assistance to developing countries and the target of 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of their gross national product for official development assistance to least developed countries, and encourage developing countries to build on the progress achieved in ensuring that official development assistance is used effectively to help meet development goals and targets and help them, inter alia, to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women;

(i) Strengthen international cooperation in the area of access and participation of women and girls in education, training, science and technology, including for the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work and the promotion of women's participation in the exchange of scientific knowledge, and welcome and encourage in this regard South-South, North-South and triangular cooperation and recognize that the commitment to explore opportunities for further South-South cooperation entails not seeking a substitute for but rather a complement to North-South cooperation;

(j) Prioritize and encourage enhanced funding and capacity development efforts for the education and training needs of girls and women in development assistance programmes;

(k) Continue to strengthen policies relevant for women's economic empowerment aimed at addressing inequality affecting women and girls, in access to and achievement in education at all levels, including in science and technology, in particular to eliminate inequalities related to age, poverty, geographical location, language, ethnicity, disability, and race, or because they are Indigenous people, or people living with HIV and AIDS;

(l) Strengthen national efforts, including with the support of international cooperation, aimed at addressing the rights and needs of women and girls affected

by natural disasters, armed conflicts, other complex humanitarian emergencies, trafficking in persons and terrorism, within the context of access and participation of women and girls to education, training and science and technology, including for the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work. Also underline the need to take concerted actions in conformity with international law to remove the obstacles to the full realization of the rights of women and girls living under foreign occupation, so as to ensure the achievement of the above-mentioned goals;

Expanding access and participation in education

(m) Ensure women's and girls' full and equal access to quality formal, informal and non-formal education and vocational training at all levels, including to free and compulsory primary education, and provide educational opportunities, including in science and technology, from early childhood and throughout the life cycle, including lifelong learning and retraining, human rights education and learning, and adult and distance education and e-learning, including in information and communications technology and entrepreneurial skills, in order to promote the empowerment of women, inter alia, through enhancing and facilitating women's access to full and productive employment, in particular to careers in science and technology;

(n) Improve and expand women's and girl's access to distance education, e-learning, tele-education and community radio, including in rural and remote communities, owing to the important role they play in women's development, including, inter alia, in helping to overcome issues related to time constraints, lack of accessibility, lack of financial resources and family responsibilities;

(o) Increase enrolment and retention rates of girls in education, inter alia, by: allocating appropriate and adequate budgetary resources; enlisting the support of parents and the community, including through campaigns and flexible school schedules; providing financial and other incentives targeted at families, including access to free education at the primary level, and at other levels where possible, and scholarships; and providing teaching, learning and hygiene and health supplies, as well as nutritional and academic support, in order to minimize the costs of education, in particular to families, and to facilitate parents' ability to choose education for their children;

(p) Ensure that pregnant adolescents and young mothers, as well as single mothers, can continue and complete their education, and design, in this regard, implement and where applicable, revise educational policies to allow them to return to school, providing them with access to health and social services and support, including childcare facilities and crèches, and to education programmes with accessible locations, flexible schedules and distance education, including e-learning, and bearing in mind the challenges faced by young fathers in this regard;

(q) Condemn all forms of violence against women and girls and take appropriate action to strengthen and implement legal, policy, administrative and other measures to prevent and eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence in order, inter alia, to ensure access and participation in education, training, full employment and decent work;

(r) Improve the safety of girls at and on the way to school, including, inter alia, by improving infrastructure such as transportation, providing separate and adequate sanitation facilities, improved lighting, playgrounds and safe environments, conducting violence prevention activities in schools and communities and establishing and enforcing penalties for all forms of harassment and violence against girls;

Strengthening gender-sensitive quality education and training, including in the field of science and technology

(s) Improve the quality of education at all levels for both girls and boys, including in science and technology education, through improving learning conditions, continuous teacher training, teaching methodologies and curriculum development, implementing programmes to improve achievements for the most disadvantaged learners and expanding recruitment and support for teachers, in particular for women teachers in scientific and technological disciplines;

(t) Ensure that education results in the acquisition by women and girls of literacy and numeracy skills, knowledge and other skills that enhance and broaden their employment opportunities;

(u) Expand and improve teacher education and training and systematically integrate a gender perspective in such programmes in order to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls and to overcome gender stereotypes;

(v) Develop gender-sensitive curricula for educational programmes at all levels and take concrete measures to ensure that educational materials portray women and men, youth, girls and boys in positive and non-stereotypical roles, particularly in the teaching of scientific and technological subjects, in order to address the root causes of segregation in working life;

(w) Remove legal, regulatory and social barriers, where appropriate, to sexual and reproductive health education within formal education programmes on women's health issues;

(x) Ensure women's and girls' right to education at all levels as well as access to life skills and sex education based on full and accurate information and, with respect to girls and boys, in a manner consistent with their evolving capacities, and with appropriate direction and guidance from parents and legal guardians, in order to help women and girls, men and boys, to develop knowledge to enable them to make informed and responsible decisions to reduce early childbearing and maternal mortality, to promote access to pre- and post-natal care and to combat sexual harassment and gender-based violence;

(y) Take steps to promote access for women and girls to education and training, including human rights education and learning at all levels, which can foster tolerance and mutual understanding and respect for all human rights, so that they can realize their full human potential by learning about the comprehensive framework of all human rights and fundamental freedoms;

(z) Provide quality education in emergency situations that is gender-sensitive, centred on learners, rights-based, protective, adaptable, inclusive, participatory and reflective of the specific living conditions of women, children and

youth, and that pays due regard, as appropriate, to their linguistic and cultural identity, mindful that quality education can foster tolerance and mutual understanding and respect for the human rights of others;

(aa) Improve hands-on experimentation and collaborative work in science and technology classes, highlight the broad societal applications of science and technology in curricula and educational material and expose girls and boys, women and men, to female role models in science and technology, in order to make science and technology, including engineering and mathematics, more attractive for girls and women;

(bb) Promote a positive image of careers in science and technology for women and girls, including in the mass media and social media and through sensitizing parents, students, teachers, career counsellors and curriculum developers, and devising and scaling up other strategies to encourage and support their participation in these fields;

Supporting the transition from education to full employment and decent work

(cc) Address the different barriers women and girls face in the transition from school to work by: expanding the scope of education and training opportunities that are relevant to employment opportunities and aligned with rapidly changing labour market needs, particularly in emerging, new and non-traditional fields; helping women acquire business, trade, information and communications technology and entrepreneurship skills; raising awareness of such opportunities and of their suitability to both women and men, particularly among parents, teachers, career counsellors and other advisers; and encouraging interaction between educational systems, the private sector and civil society, as appropriate;

(dd) Adopt policies and mechanisms to recognize women's prior learning and management skills, including those gained from informal and/or unpaid work, especially for women who discontinued their education or employment for various reasons, so as to facilitate their access to education, training and employment opportunities;

(ee) Improve access to gender-sensitive career counselling and to job search support services and include job readiness and job search skills in curricula for secondary and higher education and vocational training, in order to facilitate the transition from school to work and re-entry into the labour market for women of all ages;

(ff) Work to eliminate occupational and sectoral segregation and the gender pay gap by recognizing the value of sectors that have large numbers of women workers, such as care and other service areas, improving career pathways and working conditions and undertaking, evaluating and, where necessary, reviewing legislation, policies and programmes, public awareness campaigns and other measures, such as career management, to promote women's entry into non-traditional sectors;

(gg) Promote the reconciliation of work and family responsibilities for women and men, as well as the equal sharing of employment and family responsibilities between women and men, including by: designing, implementing and promoting family-friendly legislation, policies and services, such as affordable, accessible and quality care services for children and other dependent persons and parental and

other leave schemes; undertaking campaigns to sensitize public opinion and other relevant actors to these issues; and promoting measures that reconcile care and professional life and emphasize men's equal responsibilities with respect to household work;

(hh) Develop or strengthen policies and programmes to support the multiple roles of women in society, including in the fields of science and technology, in order to increase women's and girls' access to education, training, science and technology, while acknowledging the social significance of maternity and motherhood, parenting and the role of parents and other guardians in the upbringing of the children and caring for other family members, and ensure that such policies and programmes also promote shared responsibility of parents, women and men and society as a whole;

(ii) Encourage employers and research funding agencies to establish flexible and non-discriminatory work policies and arrangements for both women and men, such as time extension on research grants for pregnant researchers, leave schemes, quality care services and social protection policies, in order to improve the retention and progression of women in science and technology;

(jj) Implement gender-sensitive policies and programmes for women migrant workers and provide safe and legal channels that recognize their skills and education and fair labour conditions, facilitate their productive employment and decent work and integration into the labour force, including, inter alia, in the fields of education and science and technology, and ensure that all women, including care workers, are legally protected against violence and exploitation;

Increasing retention and progression of women in science and technology employment

(kk) Encourage workplace environments and institutional practices that value all members and offer them equal opportunities to reach their full potential, ensuring that gender equality and gender mainstreaming are considered a necessary dimension of human resources management, in particular for the modernization of scientific and technological organizations and institutions, both in the public and private sectors;

(ll) Encourage the use of clear and transparent criteria for, and promote the achievement of gender balance in, recruitment, promotion and recognition in science and technology, both in the public and private sectors; train and sensitize leadership and staff, at all levels, in gender mainstreaming and gender equality issues and prevent direct and indirect discrimination against women; and support the building of leadership skills for women;

(mm) Develop career advisory, networking and mentoring programmes, including programmes that utilize information and communications technology; support role models and facilitate programmes that link women scientists around the world; and promote measures to improve female retention and progression in the fields of science and technology, with a special focus on women scientists in tertiary education and early-stage career and women re-entering science and technology careers;

(nn) Take steps to ensure that science, technology and innovation policies take into account and address the specific constraints faced by women entrepreneurs and

facilitate their access to credit, training, information and business support services, including those provided in technology parks and business incubator centres;

(oo) Set concrete goals, targets and benchmarks, as appropriate, while supporting a merit-based approach, to achieve equal participation of women and men in decision-making at all levels, especially in science and technology institutions, such as science academies, research funding institutions, academia and the public and private sectors, as well as in the design of science and technology policies and research and development agenda-setting;

Making science and technology responsive to women's needs

(pp) Utilize the full potential of science and technology, including in engineering and mathematics, and their innovations to deliver improvements in infrastructure and sectors such as energy, transportation, agriculture, nutrition, health, water and sanitation and information and communications technology, in order, inter alia, to eradicate poverty, promote social development and achieve women's economic empowerment;

(qq) Create awareness of the needs of women in science and technology, including by encouraging the media to sponsor popular science programming, and report on the differential impact of science and technology on women and men;

(rr) Encourage the integration of a gender perspective in the science and technology curricula throughout all stages of education and continuous learning, and the use of gender-based analysis and gender impact assessments in research and development in science and technology, and promote a user-driven approach to technology development in order to increase the relevance and usefulness of advancements in science and technology for both women and men;

(ss) Respect, preserve and maintain women's traditional knowledge and innovation while recognizing the potential of rural and indigenous women to contribute to the production of science and technology and of new knowledge to improve their lives and those of their families and communities;

(tt) Formulate and implement public policies that increase women's and girls' access to digital technologies, including through conducting local communications campaigns.

23. The Commission recognizes the need for the compilation and sharing of good practice examples and lessons learned in mainstreaming a gender perspective into science, technology and innovation policies and programmes, with a view to replicating and scaling up successes, and in this regard looks forward to any steps or actions that could be taken by the relevant United Nations bodies, especially the Commission on Science and Technology for Development.